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THE VAULT OF HORROR!

LYDIA ARMSTRONG! "BEAUTY" AND "BRAVERY" WERE SYNONOMOUS WITH HER NAME.. ARO THE AUDI-SNCE BAT SPELLBOUND AS BHE PUT THE BIO CATS THROUGH THEIR FACES!

C'MON, BOY, UP! UP! ATTA BOY! EASY, NOW.. EADY.

SHE RISKED DEATH AOAIR ANO AOAIN WHILE BHE PERFOAMED.. ARO BHE CLIMAXED HER ACT BY LYING FLAT OR HER BACK, UNARMEO, WITH HER NANOB BENEATH HER

C'MON, KINO.. OVER HERE. C'MON, NOW. EASY, BOY.. EADY..

SLOWLY, THE HUSS SSAST DID HER BIDDINB! HE STOOD OVER HER SUPFLS FORN THEN BENT HIS SHAGGY HEAO AT HEA COMMAND, HIS MOUTH OPEREO..

THER, WHILE THE AUOIENCE BABPED, SHE LST THE LION'S JAW CLOSE AOOUT HER FACE!

THE CROWO'S THUNDEROUB AP-PLAUSE ROLLED THROUSH THE BIG TOP LIKE THUROER! LYDIA AAMSTRORB TOOK SEVERAL BOWS..

. THOSE WHO SAW THE BLEEK BLACK PANTHER CROUCH TO SPRINO.. ARO WHO CRIEO OUT IR WARRINO COULO ROT BE HEARO AOOVE THE TUMULTUOUS OVATION! THE BEAUTEOUS LYOIA TURNEO *TOO LATE!*

OVER ANO OVER THEY ROLLEO IN THE CERTER OF THE CAOE AB THE PARTHER CLAWEO HER BOOY AND TORE VICIOUSLY AT HER FACE! BAREHARDED, LYOIA FOUGHT VALIARTLY..

SHREDS OF HER FLESH AND CLOTHING WERE STREWN ABOUT THE RING BEFORE HER ASSISTANTS FINALLY SUBDUED THE BLOOD-MAD PANTHER AND CARRIED LYDIA OUT.

THEY RUSHED HER TO THE HOSPITAL.. BUT THERE WAS LITTLE THE SURGEONS COULD DO!

SHE'S BEEN TERRIBLY RIPPED AND TORN!

... LUCKY IF SHE LIVES!

... HER FACE! HOW... HOW *HORRIBLE!*

HEH' HEH' WELL, LYDIA LIVES! THEY HAD PATCHED HER *BODY* UP TILL IT WAS GOOD AS NEW BUT THERE WAS NOTHING THEY COULD DO TO FIX HER *FACE*! SHE WORE A BLACK VEIL TO HIDE THE HIDEOUS SIGHT. AND SHE BROODED DEEPLY' HEH' HEH'

STOP! DON'T YOU *DARE* TAKE A PICTURE OF ME! *GO AWAY! LEAVE ME ALONE!*

OUCH! OKAY, MISS ARMSTRONG! *OKAY!*

LYDIA ARMSTRONG RETIRED FROM THE WORLD! HER MAID AND CHAUFFEUR WERE THE ONLY PEOPLE SHE SAW..

NO ONE'S EVER SEEN HER FACE! POOR THING! SHE'S SO WEALTHY... AND YET SO LONELY!

IS THAT SO?

TED... THE WORLD FORGETS SO SOON! IT MUST BE AWFUL TO BE IN HER POSITION.. I FEEL SO SORRY FOR HER!

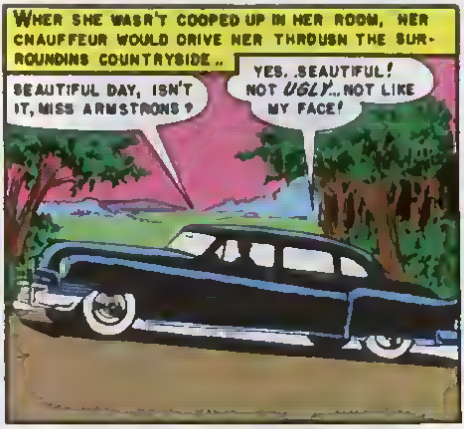
I THINK SHE'S CRACKED UP! HAVE YOU SEEN THE KIND OF BOOKS SHE'S COLLECTING?

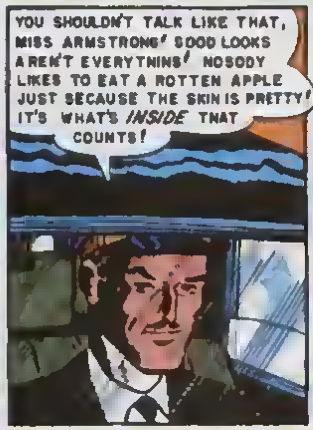
BEHIND LOCKED DOORS, LYDIA PORED OVER STACKS OF ANCIENT BOOKS WRITTEN IN A STRANGE LANGUAGE ABOUT *WITCHCRAFT!*

.. IT MUST BE IN ONE OF THESE BOOKS! IT *MUST* BE! I HOPE I'M TRANSLATING CORRECTLY!

WITCHCRAFT

LATE INTO THE NIGHT SHE READ, AND OFTEN TILL THE NEXT MORNING ..
IT'S NOT HERE! MAYBE THAT NEW SET OF BOOKS WILL HAVE WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR!


WHEN SHE WASN'T COOPED UP IN HER ROOM, HER CHAUFFEUR WOULD DRIVE HER THROUGH THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE ..
BEAUTIFUL DAY, ISN'T IT, MISS ARMSTRONG?
YES..BEAUTIFUL! NOT UGLY!..NOT LIKE MY FACE!


YOU SHOULDN'T TALK LIKE THAT, MISS ARMSTRONG! GOOD LOOKS AREN'T EVERYTHING! NOBODY LIKES TO EAT A ROTTEN APPLE JUST BECAUSE THE SKIN IS PRETTY! IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS!

YOU..YOU SOUND LIKE YOU MEAN THAT..STEVE!
I DO MEAN IT! TO ME, YOUR FACE DOESN'T MEAN A THING! I LIKE YOU AND WORK FOR YOU BECAUSE YOU.. WELL, BECAUSE YOU'RE A WONDERFUL GIRL!

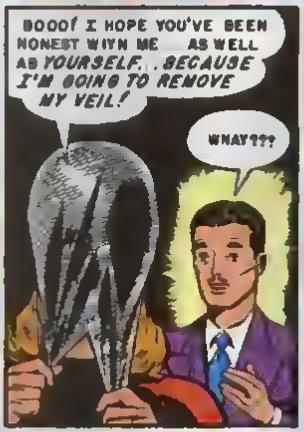
YOU... YOU'RE JUST SAYING THAT! I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!
YOU DON'T? ALL RIGHT,.. THEN I'LL PROVE IT!

TO HER SURPRISE, STEVE PULLED TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD AND PARKED
WHA.. WHY DID YOU STOP? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
I'M JUST GOING TO PROVE TO YOU THAT I MEANT ALL THOSE THINGS I SAID! C'MERE!

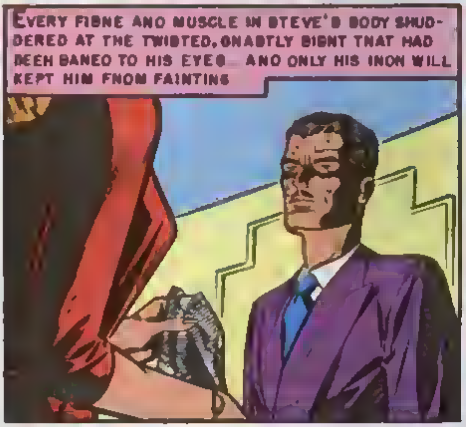
AFTER THAT, THEY WENT DRIVING MORE OFTEN AND LYDIA FOUND HERSELF DEVOTING LESS AND LESS TIME TO THE READING OF WITCHCRAFT BOOKS!
HE'S BEEN WONDERFUL! HE'D GIVEN ME AN ENTIRELY NEW FUTURE TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

HEH, HEH! YES, LYDIA VERY QUICKLY FELL IN LOVE WITH STEVE! THE MONTHS PASSED...
BUT STEVE! HOW CAN YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE YOU LOVE ME? YOU'VE NEVER SEEN MY FACE!
CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND? I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE! I LOVE YOU FOR WHAT YOU ARE!

—IF YOU MEAN THAT, STEVE, THEN YOU WON'T MIND PROVING IT TO ME, WILL YOU?
EH? OH, OF COURSE NOT!


GOOD! I HOPE YOU'VE BEEN HONEST WITH ME... AS WELL AS YOURSELF... BECAUSE I'M GOING TO REMOVE MY VEIL!
WHAT???

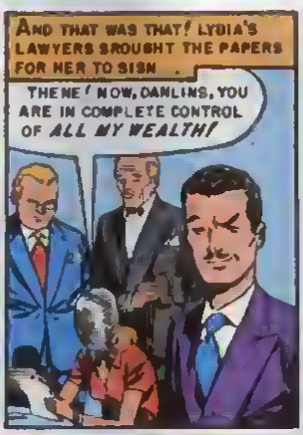
THIS WAS A SURPRISE! STEVE NEVER EXPECTED THIS TO HAPPEN BUT HE READIED HIMSELF! WITH TREMBLING HANDS LYDIA TOOK THE VEIL FROM HER FACE!

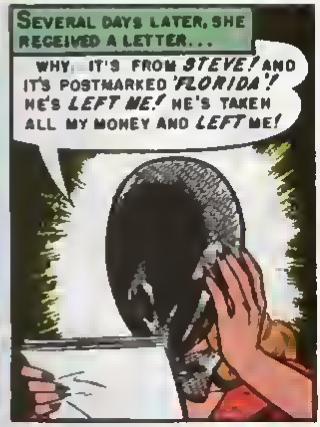

EVERY FIBRE AND MUSCLE IN STEVE'S BODY SHUDDERED AT THE TWISTED, GHASTLY SIGHT THAT HAD BEEN BARED TO HIS EYES... AND ONLY HIS IRON WILL KEPT HIM FROM FAINTING

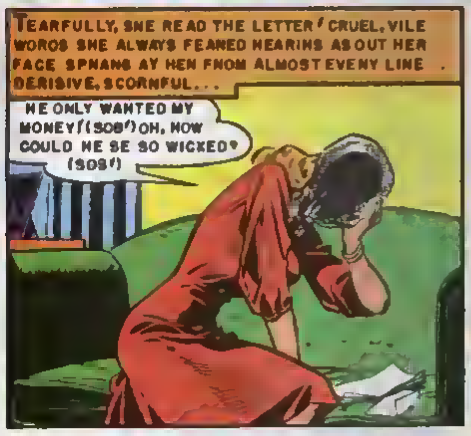
THEY STARED AT ONE ANOTHER FOR LONG, AGONIZING MINUTES! DROPLETS OF SWEAT FORMED ON HIS BROW AS STEVE STRAINED TO KEEP HIS COUNTENANCE PASSIVE! THEN SUDDENLY LYDIA FLUNG HERSELF INTO HIS ARMS, SOBBING HYSTERICALLY FOR JOY!
OH, STEVE! STEVE, MY DARLING!

IN LYDIA'S EYES, STEVE HAD PROVEN HIS LOVE FOR HER, AND SHE WAS VERY HAPPY. THEN ONE NIGHT SHE FINALLY FOUND WHAT SHE HAD BEEN SEARCHING FOR IN HER MANY BOOKS
HERE IT IS! BUT...NOW THAT I KNOW STEVE LOVES ME, IT DOESN'T SEEM SO IMPORTANT!
THROUGH LONG WEARY HOURS SHE READ AND TRANSLATED THE WEIRD CRYPTIC PASSAGES AND WHEN SHE HAD FINALLY FINISHED
SHH...JUST AS WELL THAT IT'S NOT IMPORTANT! I HAVEN'T THE NERVE FOR THIS!
LYDIA THRUST THE BOOKS ASIDE AND FORGOT ABOUT THEM! SHE AND STEVE WERE TOGETHER ALWAYS. BUT ONE DAY, SEVERAL MONTHS LATER, SHE NOTICED A CHANGE IN STEVE! AND IT WORRIED HER!
IS ANYTHING WRONG, DEAR? YOU SEEM SO THOUGHTFUL AND QUIET LATELY!
IT'S NOTHING, LYDIA! I...I'VE JUST BEEN THINKING ABOUT MY FUTURE! I'VE BEEN WANTING TO SET MYSELF UP IN BUSINESS, BUT...WELL...
YOU SEE, DARLING...I WANT TO EARN ENOUGH MONEY SO YOU WON'T FEEL THAT YOU ARE SUPPORTING ME! I WANT YOU TO BE PROUD OF ME. ONLY IT TAKES MONEY TO GET STARTED!
I KNOW, STEVE! HOW MUCH WILL YOU NEED?
OH—A LOT! I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY! WHY?
I HAVE PLENTY OF MONEY! WHY NOT LET ME START YOU IN BUSINESS? YOU CAN PAY ME BACK LATER!

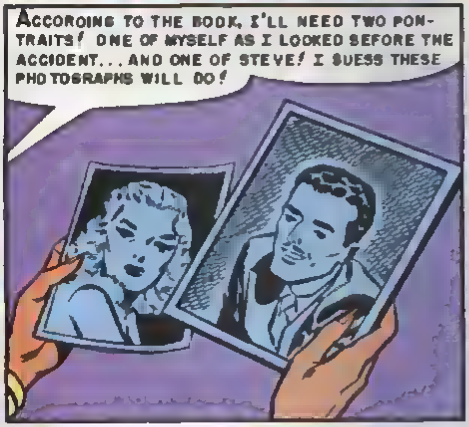
OH, NO, LYDIA! BESIDES, I...
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANOTHER WORD! IN FACT, I'LL CALL MY LAWYERS TODAY AND AUTHORIZE THEM TO GIVE YOU POWER OF ATTORNEY!

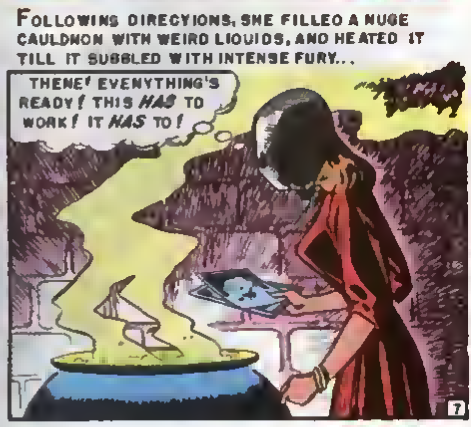

AND THAT WAS THAT! LYDIA'S LAWYERS BROUGHT THE PAPERS FOR HER TO SIGN.
THERE! NOW, DARLING, YOU ARE IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF ALL MY WEALTH!


SEVERAL DAYS LATER, SHE RECEIVED A LETTER...
WHY, IT'S FROM STEVE! AND IT'S POSTMARKED 'FLORIDA'! HE'S LEFT ME! HE'S TAKEN ALL MY MONEY AND LEFT ME!


TEARFULLY, SHE READ THE LETTER! CRUEL, VILE WORDS SHE ALWAYS FEARED HEARING ABOUT HER FACE SPRANG AT HER FROM ALMOST EVERY LINE. DERISIVE, SCORNFUL...
HE ONLY WANTED MY MONEY! (SOB!) OH, HOW COULD HE BE SO WICKED? (SOB!)

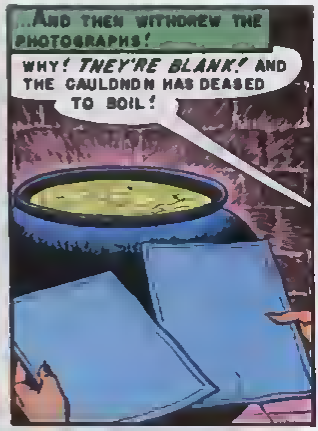
I'LL FIX HIM! I'LL SHOW HIM! AH! HERE'S THAT WITCHCRAFT BOOK! IF THIS WORKS, HE'LL BE SORRY FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE!

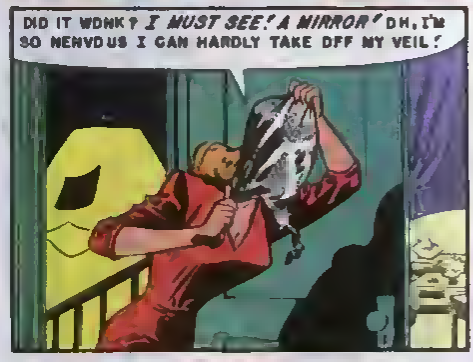

ACCORDING TO THE BOOK, I'LL NEED TWO PORTRAITS! ONE OF MYSELF AS I LOOKED BEFORE THE ACCIDENT... AND ONE OF STEVE! I GUESS THESE PHOTOGRAPHS WILL DO!

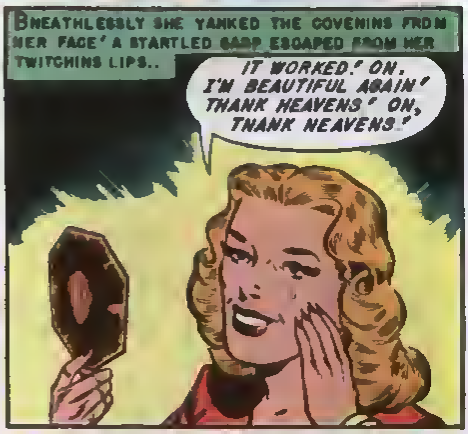

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS, SHE FILLED A HUGE CAULDRON WITH WEIRD LIQUIDS, AND HEATED IT TILL IT BUBBLED WITH INTENSE FURY...
THERE! EVERYTHING'S READY! THIS HAS TO WORK! IT HAS TO!
7

THEN SHE TOOK BOTH PHOTOS AND DIPPED THEM INTO THE SEETHING BREW...

FERVENTLY WHISPERING A BLACK INCANTATION, SHE WAITED A SPECIFIC LENGTH OF TIME...


...AND THEN WITHDREW THE PHOTOGRAPHS!
WHY! THEY'RE BLANK! AND THE CAULDRON HAS CEASED TO BOIL!


DID IT WORK? I MUST SEE! A MIRROR! OH, I'M SO NERVOUS I CAN HARDLY TAKE OFF MY VEIL!


BREATHLESSLY SHE YANKED THE COVERING FROM HER FACE! A STARTLED GASP ESCAPED FROM HER TWITCHING LIPS..
IT WORKED! OH, I'M BEAUTIFUL AGAIN! THANK HEAVENS! OH, THANK HEAVENS!

AND IN FLORIDA...
AAAGGH-HH-H! STEVE! YOUR FACE!

HEH, HEH! I BET STEVE'S NEW SINL FRIEND WAS SURPRISED! BUT IN A WAY HE WAS A BIT TWO-FACED, WASN'T HE? YOU MIGHT THINK THAT LYDIA ACTED A LITTLE CATTY ABOUT THE WHOLE AFFAIR, BUT AFTER ALL, SHE'D LIVED WITH OATS FOR YEARS! WHEN SHE GOT HER BEAUTY BACK, SHE WAS PRETTY AS A PICTURE!
We want letters! Write to: VAULT RUSS COCHRAN POB 466 WEST PLAINS MO 65775 ...AND READ THE VAULT KEEPER'S CORNER IN THIS ISSUE! HEH! 'BYE FOR NOW!

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

GREETINGS, GHOULS! YES, IT'S ME .. *THE CRYPT-KEEPER* . AGAIN! NOW THAT THE *VAULT-KEEPER* HAS FINISHED *HIS NURSERY TALE*, *I'LL ENTERTAIN YOU* WITH A *HORROR STORY!* THIS ONE IS ANOTHER FROM MY VAST COLLECTION OF *TERROR TALES* THAT I JEALOUSLY GUARD HERE IN THE CRYPT! IT'S A YARN SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO CURDLE YOUR BLOOD AND MAKE THE HAIR ON YOUR NECK BRISTLE AND CRAWL! I CALL IT...

THE RELUCTANT VAMPIRE!

AS THE LAST RAYS OF THE SETTING SUN RETREAT BEFORE THE ADVANCING ARMY OF NIGHT, MY STORY BEGINS! DOWN IN THE DISMAL STALE-SMELLING BLACKNESS OF A CELLAR, LIES A ROTTING, COB-WEBBED COFFIN! SUDDENLY ITS RUSTED HINGES SCREAM IN PROTEST AS THE LID RAISES! A HOLLOW-CHEEKED, WHITE-SKINNED MAN SITS UP...

THE GAUNT MAN CLIMBS FROM THE COFFIN... TURNS... AND CLOSES THE LID CAREFULLY...
BE SAFE FROM PRYING EYES, DEAR HOME, UNTIL THE MORNING, WHEN I WILL RETURN!
BRUSHING OFF THE BITS OF SOIL THAT CLING TO HIS SHABBY CLOTHES, THE WEIRD FIGURE CLIMBS THE RICKETY STAIRS THAT LEAD FROM HIS SUBTERRANEAN REFUGE...
IF I'M LATE AGAIN, I'LL LOSE MY JOB! THEN...UGH! BACK TO KILLING!
...OUT OF THE ABANDONED RUINS OF A ONCE PROUD LOFT BUILDING, HE MOVES, DOWN NARROW, TWISTING STREETS...NOW DESERTED BY THE FACTORY WORKERS THAT THRONG THEM DURING THE DAY..
...AND THAT WOULD BE A SHAME...WHEN THIS WAY IS SO MUCH EASIER!
...ON INTO THE HEART OF THE CITY! AT THE DOORWAY TO AN IMPOSING BUILDING, THE STRANGE FIGURE STOPS. SMILES AT THE SIGN POSTED THERE THEN ENTERS...
AH! TWO MINUTES TO NINE! I'M EARLY!
CENTRAL CITY BLOOD DONOR CENTER
GIVE A PINT TODAY!
SAVE A LIFE TOMORROW!
OPEN EVERY NIGHT TILL NINE P.M.!
HE IS GREETED BY AN ANXIOUS, OVERWEIGHT MAN...
AH! MR. DRINK! THANK HEAVENS YOU'RE EARLY! I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT UPTOWN! GOOD EVENING!
EVENING, MR. GROSS!
MR. DRINK WATCHES AS MR. GROSS STAMPS FROM THE BLOOD DONOR CENTER AND LOOKS THE DOOR! THEN HE PICKS UP THE RING OF KEYS, THE CLOCK, AND THE BADGED CAP...
WHAT A GIRCH! A NIGHT WATCHMAN IN A BLOOD BANK!
MR. DRINK UNLOCKS THE DOOR MARKED 'BLOOD BANK, REFRIGERATED, KEEP OUT' AND GOES IN! ON THE SHELVES ARE ROWS OF BOTTLES FILLED WITH BLOOD...
THE PERFECT JOB FOR A VAMPIRE!
OUT
2

HEH, HEH! YES, KIDDIES! IT'S JUST AS YOU SUSPECTED! MR. DRINK IS A VAMPIRE! A LAZY VAMPIRE! UNTIL THE IDEA OF GETTING A JOB IN A BLOOD BANK OCCURRED TO MR DRINK, HE HAD TO GO ABOUT GETTING HIS BLOOD IN THE USUAL WAY... BY KILLING PEOPLE! BUT THIS THIS WAY IS MUCH EASIER... AND SO MUCH LESS DISTASTEFUL...
AFTER MR. DRINK HAS SATISFIED HIS APPETITE...
NOW TO CHANGE THE RECORDS OF THE DAY'S DONATIONS!
RECORD
MR DRINK UNLOCKS THE DOOR TO THE OFFICE WHERE THE RECORDS ARE KEPT AND...
THE RECORD BOOKS! THEY'RE NOT HERE!
FEAR CLUTCHES AT MR. DRINK'S VAMPIRE HEART...
WHAT'LL I DO? THEY'LL FIND OUT THAT BLOOD IS MISSING IF I DON'T CHANGE THE RECORDS! THEY'LL ACCUSE ME... AND I'LL BE EXPOSED!
MR DRINK RUSHES FROM THE BLOOD DONOR CENTER... CARRYING A SMALL BLACK BAG...
I'VE GOT TO REPLACE THE BLOOD I'VE TAKEN!
OR A DARK DESERTED STREET, MR DRINK WAITS IN THE SHADOWS OF A DOORWAY
SOMEONE ..IS COMING!
THE RIGHT IS FILLED WITH THE SCREAMS OF A DYING MAN, AS THE BLOOD IS DRAINED FROM HIS BODY!
AAAAAGH!
3

THE NEXT NIGHT, WHEN MR DRINK COMES TO HIS JOB AT THE BLOOD DONOR CENTER, THERE IS AN UNUSUAL MEETING TAKING PLACE ..

WHAT'S GOING ON, SALLY? IT'S PAST CLOSING TIME!

MR. CROSS HAS CALLED A MEETING OF THE STAFF, MR DRINK! HE HAS AN ANNOUNCEMENT...

MR. CROSS CLEARS HIS THROAT, AND A HUSH FALLS OVER THE GATHERING...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! I HAVE CALLED THIS MEETING TO ANNOUNCE THAT *UNLESS* THIS CENTER TAKES IN *TWICE* THE AMOUNT OF BLOOD IT *HAS* BEEN TAKING IN, THE HOME OFFICE IS GOING TO *CLOSE* US UP OUR EQUIPMENT WILL BE SENT TO ANOTHER CENTER WHERE IT WILL BE PUT TO BETTER USE!

BUT, MR. CROSS, BLOOD PLASMA IS NEEDED BADLY!

RIGHT! BUT THE *AMOUNT* TAKEN IN AT *THIS* CENTER DOES NOT JUSTIFY THE EXPENSE OF KEEPING IT *OPEN! THAT* IS THE PURPOSE OF *THIS MEETING*... TO DISCUSS WAYS AND MEANS OF *INCREASING* DONATIONS SO WE *CAN* REMAIN OPEN!

MR. DRINK LISTENS INTENTLY! MR. DRINK IS *FRIGHTENED!* IF THEY CLOSE THE CENTER, HE'LL BE OUT OF A JOB ..

.. AND I'D HAVE TO GO BACK TO DOING WHAT I DID LAST NIGHT! *KILLING*.. UGH..

AND THEN MR DRINK HAS A DESPERATE PLAN! A PLAN TO KEEP THE CENTER OPERATING...

WHY *NOT?* IT WILL ONLY BE FOR A *WHILE*... UNTIL THE HOME OFFICE COOLS OFF...

SO, THAT NIGHT, MR DRINK GOES OUT AGAIN WITH THE LITTLE BLACK BAG ..

I'LL JUST TAKE A *LITTLE* FOR MYSELF! THE REST, I'LL PUT IN THE BLOOD BANK AND CHANGE THE RECORDS! I MUSTN'T LET THEM CLOSE DOWN.

AND SO, AGAIN, MR DRINK WAITS IN A DESERTED SECTION OF THE CITY FOR A VICTIM ..

UGH! HERE COMES SOMEONE NOW!

AND ONCE MORE, THE NIGHT IS PIERCED BY THE SCREAM OF A DYING SOUL...

EEEEEAH!

THEN MR. DRINK RETURNS TO THE BLOOD-DONOR CENTER AND...

THERE! THERE ARE EIGHT MORE PINTS THEY DIDN'T COUNT ON!

THEN HE CHANGES THE RECORDS...

LET'S SEE... SEVEN PINTS...PLUS EIGHT... IS FIFTEEN! HMMMM! THAT'S *MORE* THAN *DOUBLE!*

THE NEXT DAY, WHILE MR. DRINK SLEEPS SOUNDLY IN HIS COFFIN...

MR. CROSS! I...

COME IN, SALLY! I'VE JUST BEEN READING THE PAPERS! ISN'T IT *HORRIBLE?*

WHAT... MR. CROSS?

WHY, THE *MURDERS!* *TWO* IN A ROW! THE *BLOOD* WAS *DRAINED* FROM THE VICTIMS' *BODIES!* THEY SAY IT'S THE WORK OF...*SALLY!* YOU LOOK *SICK!*

THAT NIGHT MR. DRINK SEARCHES THE CITY FOR ANOTHER VICTIM...

OUCH! HOW I HATE THIS! BUT... IT'S GOT TO BE THIS WAY FOR A WHILE IF I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS *ALL THE TIME...*

...AND AGAIN THE BLOOD-BANK HAS SEVERAL EXTRA DONATIONS...

EIGHT PINTS TODAY...PLUS *MY* NINE MAKES SEVENTEEN! WE'RE *IMPROVING!*

TRE POLICE ARE BAFFLED..
THAT'S TRE FIFTH MURDER IH A WEEK' AND EVERY ORE OF TRE VICTIMR DRAINED OF TREIR RLOOD' I TELL YOU THERE'S A VAMPIRE LODSE...
THE HOME OFFICE IS AMAZED.
ACTUALLY DOUBLED THEIR PREVIOUS RECORDS' THE DIRECTOR,THERE, DESERVES A MEDAL!
I'LL CONTACT THE ARMY!
THE ARMY IS PLEASED...
FOR HIS PATRIOTIC WORK IN INCREARIHR HIR CENTER'S BLOOD INTAKE RY ONE HUNDRED PERCENT, THE ARMY AUTHORIZES TH AT MR. CHRISTOPHER CROSS RE AWARDED...
AND SO...
LOOK SALLY' THEY SERT IT YD ME' A MEDAL... FOR PATRIOTIC ARD UR - SELFIRH EFFORT IH..
MR.CROSS'THERE'S REEN ANOTHER MURDER.. AND..
WELL, CHILD! WHAT IR IT? SPEAK UP!
TWO NIGHTS AGO, REFORE I WENT HOME, I CHECKED THE DAY'S DORATIOHS' THERE WERE FIVE PINTS' THE NEXT MORNING WHEN I CHECKED ASAIN, THERE WERE FOURTEEN!'
YOU MEAN...
THE VAMPIRE THAT HAS REEN KILLING THOSE POOR PEOPLE AND ORAIRING TREIR SLOOD, RRIRGR IT HERE!
RUT, MR DRINK, THE NIGHT WATCRMAN, WOULD HAVE...
MR DRIRK IR THE VAMPIRE' THIS MORNIRR I FOLLOWED HIM 'HOME' HE...HE LIVES IH A...RASP... COFFIN!'

COME! WE MUST TELL THE POLICE!
YES! THEY WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO!
MR. CROSS AND SALLY RUSH TO THE POLICE, AND SALLY TELLS HER STORY...
AND IN THE BASEMENT OF THE ABANDONED LOFT BUILDING WAS A COFFIN! MR. DRINK CLIMBED IN...
THEN HE IS A VAMPIRE!
LET'S GO GET HIM!
WAIT! WE CAN'T BRING HIM IN! WE'VE GOT TO DESTROY HIM WHERE HE LIES!
SALLY LEADS THE DETECTIVES TO THE HIDDEN PLACE OF MR. DRINK...
HE'S IN THERE!
OPEN THE LID, ED! I'M READY...
WAIT!
THIS MEDAL BELONGS TO HIM! HE DOUBLED THE BLOOD DONOR CENTER'S RECORD... NOT I! THE MEDAL IS RIGHTFULLY HIS!
WELL, LAY IT ON HIS CHEST, MR. CROSS! I'LL PIN IT ON HIM...
...WITH THIS STAKE!
...THE CRACK-CRACK-CRACK OF ROCK ON WOOD ECHOES THROUGH THE LITTERED CELLAR AS THE DETECTIVE DRIVES THE ROUGHLY HEWN STAKE THROUGH MR. DRINK'S HEART PINNING THE MEDAL TO HIS BLOOD-SOAKED CHEST AT THE SAME TIME
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S MY STORY, KIDDIES! MR. DRINK WAS THROUGH DRINKIN' AFTER THAT! IN FACT HE WAS THROUGH... ALL THE WAY! BUT YOU'RE NOT THROUGH! FOLLOWING THIS TALE OF MINE, YOU WILL FIND THE VAULT-KEEPER'S CORNER!
READ IT!
IT WILL TELL YOU HOW TO GET BACK ISSUES OF THIS MAG AND THE OTHER EC TITLES, INCLUDING MINE, TALES FROM THE CRYPT! SEE YOU NEXT IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR. BYE!

THE VAULT-KEEPER'S CORNER

President and CEO—Stephen A. Geppi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Russ,

I have to say that I am a bit surprised at Dave Hall's statement in VAULT #6 that nobody "can imagine what in the world" ["The Raven"] is supposed to be about. I would suggest reading Poe's own essay "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846). However, some students of the master think that the explanation given is a little disingenuous, along the lines of "The Balloon Hoax."

It is interesting that Dave goes back to ancient Rome to find a source for the poem. Try the article "The Raven and the Raven" by Joseph Jones in AMERICAN LITERATURE Volume 31 (1960). I still have my handwritten notes on that one from my academic days. There is also a piece titled "The Raven, The Parrot, and the Pigeon" in the small press publication FANTASY MACABRE #11 (1988). "Sweeney among the Nightingales" by T.S. Eliot, now that's one nobody can figure out.

On the subject of zombies the classic work is "The Magic Island" by William Seabrook (1929). More recent and probably more authoritative is "The Serpent and the Rainbow" by Harvard ethnobotanist Wade Davis (1985). The movie of the same name (1988), directed by Wes Craven, is loosely based on the book. Davis followed up with "Passage of Darkness—The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombie." The best fictional collection (in fact the only) I have seen is "Stories of the Walking Dead" (1985), one of the many anthologies edited by Peter Haining.

And since no one else has mentioned it, "The Grave Wager" in VAULT #6 is adapted from the short piece "A Watcher by the Dead" by Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914?), another American writer of weird tales well worth reading.

Finally, I thought that I was seeing things when I read "Till Death Do Us Part" drawn by Vic Carrabetta in CURSE OF THE WEIRD #3. I was, too, a lot of Johnny Craig artwork. Marvel admitted the Wally Wood swipes but not the Craig. Imagine mixing atomic bombs, murderous bookkeepers and voodoo. Even the title sounded familiar.

Mark A. Bernstein — Jersey City, NJ

Ethnobotanist? You're just making that up! —VK

Dear CK, OW, VK, and Russ,

CK and OW told us how they were born. But I want to see how VK was born, so if you can please reprint that issue I will be very thankful. Also, how can I get another form to have a 6 issue subscription?

Chazmond Peacock — Brooklyn, NY

You may call me Chazie.

And you can call me—Mr. The Vault Keeper, Sir! Heh, heh! Jes' kidding!

As I will be called upon to mention for eternity, I guess, EC never printed an origin story for me.

You need no special form to subscribe, merely money! Write the specifics (name, address, what you want) on any old death certificate or scrap of shroud and send it in. —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I am 10 years old. I think your comics are so exciting I read them in the dark with a flashlight. I just got done reading "The Mask of Horror" in VAULT 7. It was real scary. I've always wondered why the Crypt-Keeper gets his own show when you don't. That stinks. Your stories are way better. I like X-MEN books but your stories are the best. Could you pretty please write back. If you do you'd be cooler than cool.

Matthew Smith — Utica, NY

I'm so cool, M&Ms won't melt in my mouth. But I can't handily write back.

Remember, you get four complete stories in an EC comic, but the X-Men go on forever and ever and ever... —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

Hi. I am 10 years old. I have been a big fan since I was 8. I've been collecting CRYPT, VAULT and HAUNT. I have all of them except for CRYPT #1. I never had a chance to get it.

Stephen Leopold — Gardener, NY

Au contraire, mes ami! You can still get a copy of any of our back issues of anything. Check the end of this column for the info on back issue 32-pgers. —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

My favorite stories are "Werewolf Concerto!", "Fitting Punishment", "The Grave Wager", "Escape!" and "The Mask of Horror". Great job on VAULT #7. Please print my address, I love to have penpals. I am 12 years old.

Dara Conner — 7927 Rambler PL, Cincinnati, OH 45231

You mention stories from several back issues. All back issues are available; see the note at the end of this column. —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

Is Mrs. Thaumaturge your twin sister in VAULT 6 "Daddy Lost His Head!!"? It certainly looks like it.

I come from England, and in England we don't get the HBO television series "Tales from the Crypt." If you could please tell me if I could buy the HBO series on video I would be most grateful. One magazine said that some of the series are available to buy already, and that CK, OW and VK are soon to be made into figures. Is this true? I hope so.

Oliver Wingrave — Surrey, ENGLAND

Mrs. Thaumaturge (look it up!) has one of those Roman noses—it's roman down towards her chin! Now, which GhouLunatic does that remind you of? Hm?

The figure they are talking of making me into is: ? . How do you pronounce it? Ask !

We don't know the specifics on availability of HBO "Tales from the Crypt" videos; clue us in, hip-Brits. —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

Did you know that you rule? Those clowns The Crypt-Keeper and The Old Witch [have told] how they were born, but can you tell me how you were born? You've been

keeping it a secret for a long time. Isn't it about time you tell somebody before it's too late?

I like your stories very much, but the Crypt-Keeper keeps stealing them

Bryan Kortie — North Beach, MD

I rule, and the anonymous editor rules the borders! It's been so long since I "originated," I'm not sure I remember it right, myself! —VK

Dear VK,

I think your comics are cool. Can you write a comic about zombies? I have been begging my dad to take me to the comic store to buy more VAULT comics

Adam Zace — Downers Grove, IL

No true zombies (as opposed to mere re-animated corpses—accept no substitutes!) in the immediate future, the CR has some pseudo-voodoo in CRYPT 10 soon-to-come.

Hey, let's write a brand-new zombie tale! I've already got a title: "Ain't Got Nothin' Zombie!". —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I recently became an EC fan when I got VAULT #6. It was really good. I loved Graham Ingels' art in "Dying to Lose Weight!" The only story that wasn't quite as scary as the rest was "The Mask of Horror"

David Lowery — Irving, TX

Those stories are in VAULT 7. The scariest thing about "Mask" is the pledging of mutual 'want' after a single evening's acquaintance! Maybe that's how he got into his crummy marriage in the first place! —VK

Dear VK,

I love issue #7! My favorite stories were "Lend Me a Hand!" and "Sink-Hole!" The pictures were great (especially the dead guys!)! I kept thinking zombies were going to jump at me after I read "Sink-Hole"! I love being scared!

Adam Townsend, age 10 — Wintersville, OH

Great, Adam! Glad we left you jumpy. But, like we warned above, don't confuse a re-animated dead guy with a real zombie! You might just jump the wrong way! —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

Wow! VAULT #7 is truly a masterpiece. Every story was great, but my favorite was "Sink-Hole." When Shirley hit Aldous with that frying pan, I winced from the blow! In fact my head still hurts whenever I look at that story.

VAULT is my favorite comic book now. I can hardly stand the wait between issues! Thanks a million for sharing your fetid fables with us. Vault-Keeper! Your devoted fan,

Jim Davis — Pullman, WA

"KLANG!" —VK

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Wendy Birritella	I-can't-read-it, NY
Morty Ellis	Glendale, AZ
Brian S. Jeffrey	Mobile, AL
George S. Estyn	Aloha, OR
Jason Kennedy	Hartford, CT
Cory Mace	Biloxi, MS
Joe Mascetti	Baltimore, MD
S. Miller	Sandy, UT
Bruno Mostal	Belford, NJ
Heath Pash	Nashville, TN
Mike Rogers	Ten City, IS
Chris Schilling	Alliance, OH
Dave Saurak	Aberdeen, WA
Frederic Verdy	Outremont, PQ
Rick Verdy	CANADA

Dear VK,

Just got some back issues in the mail and I gotta say VAULT 6 was the best! "Terror on the Moors!" and "Baby...It's Cold Inside!" were by far my favorites. I have all the 64-page reprints and I plan on buying all the 32-pagers also

Your mag is my favorite among the horror comics but I also like the others. Got a drawing here to hang in your vault! Keep up the gory work!

Nathan Little — Montgomery, AL

Sometimes I hang the art, sometimes I hang the artist. This time, you were lucky. For future reference, what's your collar size? —VK

NATHAN'S DRAWING

Also available this month are WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED TALES. Watch for HAUNT, WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY and CRIME next month. Don't forget CRYPT, WEIRD SCIENCE and SHOCK. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic)!

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1 (subject to availability), $3 each. All others up thru issue #8, $1.50 each. Issues #4 and up, $2 each. Add $0 per order ($15 outside US) for S&H.

We want MORE letters! Write to:
VAULT
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

THIS COMIC REPRINTS
VAULT OF HORROR "#20" (#9, AUG/SEP 51)

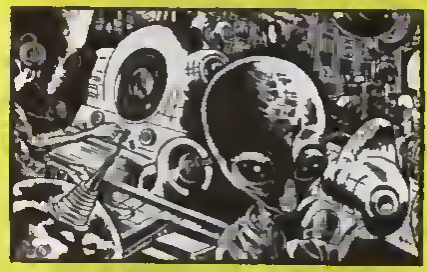
COVER by Johnny Craig

"About Face!"	Johnny Craig
"The Reluctant Vampire!"	Jack Davis
"Grandma's Ghost!!"	Jack Kamen
"Revenge is the Nuts!"	Graham Ingels

We welcome letters of comment. We cannot address to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We edit for clarity, accuracy and length. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to accommodate publication of letters, to do so we need your address on the individual letter.

AN OLD friend of ours sat for this moody monster pic from the pen (ballpoint?) of Jessica Beebe, ST Louis, MO. And that's how I start off this special coming-of-age edition of THE CRYPT KEEPER's PAGE OF...

FINE ARTS #21

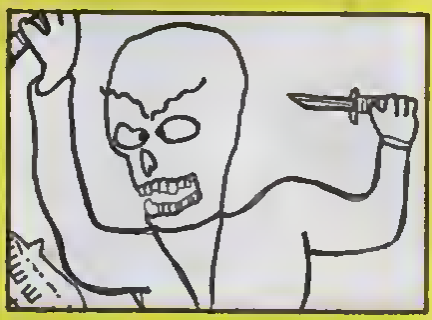


AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL etching from the spacy stylus of Sammy Stewart of Fairfield, IL. Or, as Sammy says:

Here [is a] drawing of UFO occupants. I am illustrating a UFO book. The art of Wally Wood has always been my ideal

Wally Wood didn't do a tremendous number of EC horror stories, but I forgive him because his BF was so good!

—CK

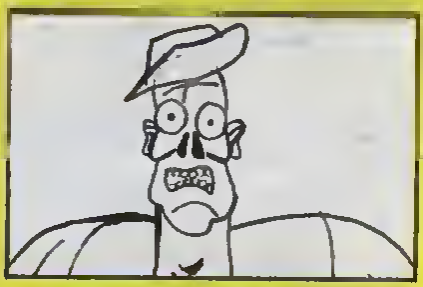


"VAULT-KEEPER RULES!!" says Matthew Smith, Utica, NY, of the cretinous countenance above. Maybe this is what the video version of Ol' VK would look like if the TV guys had decided to do "Tales from the Vault." Below, what the TV guys would look like as deliriously depicted by William Pearson, Rutland, VT!

—CK

'HUDGE' THANKS to Arton, Groton, NY for this think-piece, a guy who's head was too big for the panel! Are you sure you didn't swipe this from the cover of the October 1955 issue of DC's MYSTERY ADJACENT TO SPACE?

—CK



Send your contribs (not returnable, not too long, not too big, legible doublespaced text &/or bold black art. Warning...we edit!) to:

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S
PAGE OF FINE ARTS
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

We welcome contributions. We cannot promise to return, acknowledge or publish contributions. We edit for clarity, economy and size. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication to do so we need your address on the individual contribution.

Here's a chilling tale about little Peggy and her...
GRANDMA'S GHOST!!
PEGGY SAT BOLT UPRIGHT IN HER BED AND STARED INTO THE DARKNESS! IT CAME AGAIN AN UNMISTAKABLE CRY OF PAIN
AAAAAAAH! HELP ME...
GRANDMA!
PEGGY SWEPT HER COVERS ASIDE AND PUSHED HER TINY FEET INTO THE FURRY SLIPPERS THAT STOOD AT ATTENTION BENEATH HER BED ... ...
IT'S GRANDMA! SHE'S HAVING ANOTHER ATTACK!
1

OUT OF HER GAYLY DECORATED ROOM... DOWN THE LONG ELABORATELY FURNISHED CORRIDOR .INTO HER GRANDMOTHER'S BED ROOM, THE TERRIFIED LITTLE GIRL RUSHED...
GRANDMA!
PEGGY DEAN... GASP.. HELP ME! MY PILLS.. ON THE NIGHT-TABLE
PEGGY, HER EYES FILLING WITH TEARS, PULLED THE FAMILIAR STRING THAT LIT GRANDMA'S NIGHT-TABLE LAMP...
HURRY DEAN GIVE ME.. TWO AND SOME WATER
THEY THEY'RE NOT HERE, GRANDMA!
THEY MUST BE THERE! THEY MUST BE! LOOK FOR THEM GASP.
THEY'RE NOT ON THE FLOOR, EITHER...
PEGGY SCURRIED ABOUT HER GRANDMOTHER'S ROOM, TRYING TO KEEP HERSELF FROM CRYING, AS SHE SEARCHED FOR THE LITTLE AMBER-COLORED GLASS BOTTLE WITH THE YELLOW CAPSULES...
I.. I CAN'T FIND IT, GRANNY! I CAN'T! I'LL GO GET UNCLE LAWRENCE.
DON'T BOTHER, PEGGY! THEY WENT OUT EARLIER! COME HERE CHILD!
PEGGY EDGED TOWARD HER GRANDMOTHER'S BED! THE OLD WOMAN WHITNED IN PAIN, BUT AS THE SOBBING CHILD DREW NEAR, SHE MANAGED A WEAK SMILE...
I'M GOING TO... HAVE TO... GO AWAY PEGGY, DEAR! I.. MAY NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN!
DON'T LEAVE ME, GRANNY! DON'T LEAVE ME WITH UNCLE LAWRENCE AND AUNT HELEN! TAKE ME WITH YOU
I.. I CAN'T CHILD! I DON'T WANT TO GO BUT I MUST... GASP... SIGH..
GRANNY! GRANNY! WAKE UP, GRANNY!
PEGGY TURNED FROM HER GRANDMOTHER'S GHSLR-WHITE FACE AND TIP-TOED FROM THE ROOM! "GRANDMA IS ASLEEP," SHE THOUGHT! SHE LOOKED INTO HER AUNT AND UNCLE'S ROOM AS SHE PASSED! IT STOOD ON THE DRESSER AMONG HER AUNT'S PERFUME BOTTLES
THE BOTTLE OF PILLS! GRANDMA'S PILLS!
2

PERRY CLUTCHED THE PILLR IN HER TINY [illegible] AS SHE RAN RACR TO HER GRANDMOTHER'S RODM! SHE SHOOK HER ROUGHLY...

WAKE UP, GRANNY! WAKE UP! I FOUND THE PILLS! AUNT HELEN HAD THEM... IN HER ROOM! WAKE UP! CAN'T YOU HEAR ME?

NO ROUND CAME FROM THE WAXEN FACE OF THE OLD WOMAN! RHE WAS...IN FACT.. VERY DEAD! PERRY DIDN'T KNOW! RHE WAS TOO YOUNR TO UNDERRTAND RHE COULDN'T UNDERRTAND WHY THEY PUT RRANNY IN A RLACR BOX, EITHER.. OR WHY THEY RURIED HER DEEP IN THE RDFT EARTH OF THE CEMETERY! AND, MOST OF ALL ..RHE COULDN'T UNDERRTAND WHY HER GRANDMA'S PILL BOTTLE HAPPERED TO RE IR HER AUNT AND UNCLE'S ROOM...

AFTER THE FUNERAL, PERRY'S AUNT ARD UNCLE DRANK A TOAST...

WELL, LARRY! THE DLO RAL'S ODUGH WILL RE OURS SOOR...

AR ROOR AR THE WILL IR READ!

BUT AUNT HELEN AND UNCLE LARRY WERE IN FOR A SHOCK...

ARD RD I, MABEL RRITT, LEAVE MY ERTIRE FORTUNE TO MY SRARDDAUGHTER, PERRY SRITT.. TO RE TURNED OVER TO HER WHER SHE RHE REACHES TWERTY YEARR OF ARE

PERRY MISSED HER SRARDMA VERY MUCH! SHE LONGED FOR AFFECTION! HER AUNT HELER ARD UNCLE LARRY DIDN'T RIVE IT TO HER! THEY SEEMED TO RESENT HER...

IT'LL BE EASY! WITH THE RRAT OUT OF THE WAY, THE FORTUNE WILL RE OURS!

YOU MEAN... KILL HER!

EXACTLY! WHERE IR SHE?

SHE'S WITH THAT CURSED RARDERER ARAIR..

YER! PERRY HAD FOURD A RUBSTITUTE FOR HER DEPARTER RRANDMOTHER ..ALEX SATES, THE FAMILY SARDENER...

OH, ALEX! YOU'RE SO FUNNY! TELL ME WDRE!

RO, THE LITTLE SEAR RTUCK HIS PAW WAY DOWN INTO THE REE-HIVE..

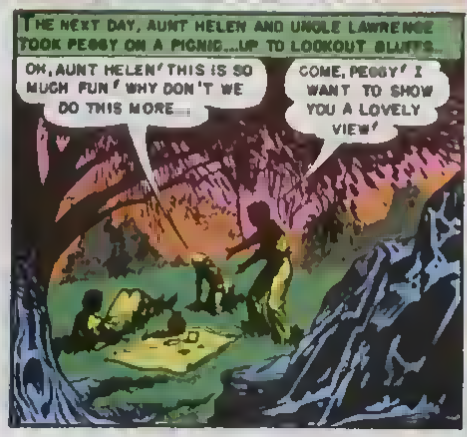
ALEX BATES WAS JUST WHAT PEGGY NEEDED! PEGGY'S PARENTS HAD DIED WHEN PEGGY WAS AN INFANT! PEGGY WENT TO SEE HIM AS OFTEN AS SHE COULD...
PEGGY! IT'S PAST YOUR DINNER TIME! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
TO SEE ALEX! I...I LIKE HIM! I ATE AT HIS PLACE!

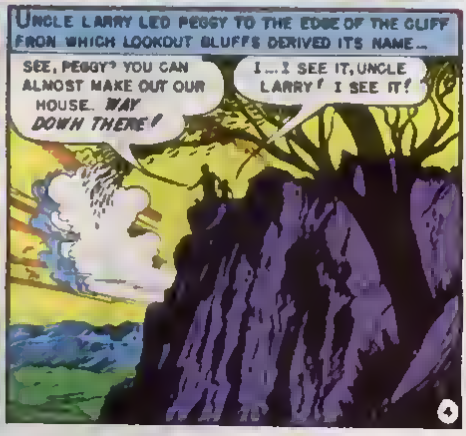
YOU STAY AWAY FROM THAT DIRTY OLD MAN! I DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE HIM ANY MORE!
BUT...BUT GRANDMA SAYS HE'S A FINE MAN! SHE SAYS HE...
GRANDMA SAYS? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

WHY, I'M TALKING ABOUT GRANDMA! LAST NIGHT WHEN SHE CAME TO SEE ME...
...GY! YOUR GRANDMOTHER IS DEAD! DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

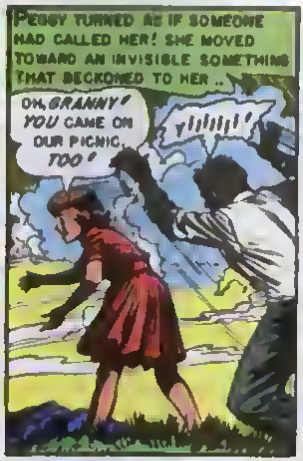
OH, YES! GRANDMA TOLD ME! SHE SAID I...
PEGGY! GO UP TO YOUR ROOM! THIS INSTANT!

PEGGY SHRUGGED HER LITTLE SHOULDERS AND HURRIED UPSTAIRS! WHEN SHE WAS GONE...
IT'S THAT GARDENER! HE'S FILLED HER HEAD WITH FANTASTIC NOTIONS!
WE'VE GOT TO DO IT...KILL HER...SOON! TOMORROW!

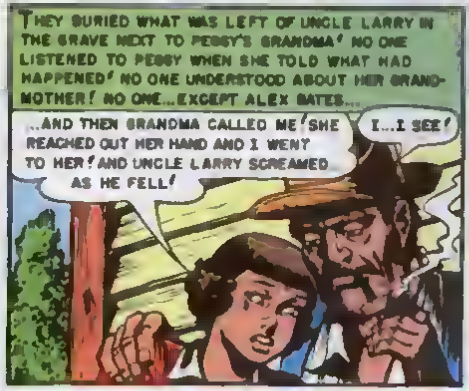

THE NEXT DAY, AUNT HELEN AND UNCLE LAWRENCE TOOK PEGGY ON A PICNIC...UP TO LOOKOUT BLUFFS...
OH, AUNT HELEN! THIS IS SO MUCH FUN! WHY DON'T WE DO THIS MORE...
COME, PEGGY! I WANT TO SHOW YOU A LOVELY VIEW!


UNCLE LARRY LED PEGGY TO THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF FROM WHICH LOOKOUT BLUFFS DERIVED ITS NAME...
SEE, PEGGY? YOU CAN ALMOST MAKE OUT OUR HOUSE. WAY DOWN THERE!
I...I SEE IT, UNCLE LARRY! I SEE IT!

LARRY'S EYES WERE WILD AND BULGING AS HE GRITTED HIS TEETH AND MOVED UP BEHIND PEGGY.
JUST ONE LITTLE SHOVE! JUST ONE!
HUH?


PEGGY TURNED AS IF SOMEONE HAD CALLED HER! SHE MOVED TOWARD AN INVISIBLE SOMETHING THAT BECKONED TO HER..
OH, GRANNY! YOU CAME ON OUR PICNIC, TOO!
Y!!!!!!!

UNCLE LARRY'S LUNGE HAD BEEN A SPLIT SECOND TOO LATE! HE PUSHED FORWARD OUT OVER THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF AND HURLED DOWNWARD TOWARD THE JAGGED ROCKS..FOUR-HUNDRED FEET BELOW.
AAAAAAGGG


THEY BURIED WHAT WAS LEFT OF UNCLE LARRY IN THE GRAVE NEXT TO PEGGY'S GRANDMA! NO ONE LISTENED TO PEGGY WHEN SHE TOLD WHAT HAD HAPPENED! NO ONE UNDERSTOOD ABOUT HER GRANDMOTHER! NO ONE...EXCEPT ALEX BATES...
..AND THEN GRANDMA CALLED ME! SHE REACHED OUT HER HAND AND I WENT TO HER! AND UNCLE LARRY SCREAMED AS HE FELL!
I...I SEE!

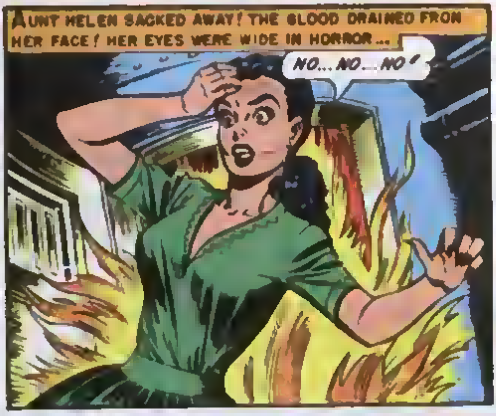
BUT, IN HER BLACK MOURNING CLOTHES, PEGGY'S AUNT HELEN UNDERSTOOD ONLY ONE THING...
NOW THAT LARRY'S OUT OF THE WAY, THE MONEY WILL BE MINE...ALL MINE!

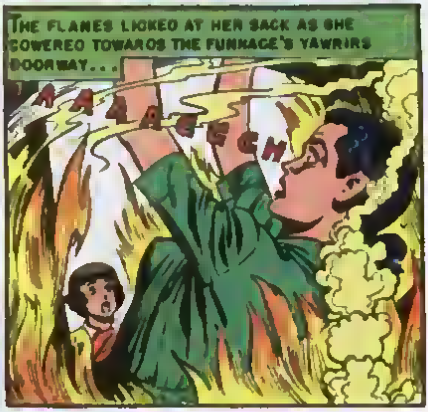
YES! AUNT HELEN HAD MADE UP HER MIND! SHE WOULD GO THROUGH WITH THE ORIGINAL PLAN! SHE WOULD DO AWAY WITH SWEET, FRAIL PEGGY...
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
I...I WENT TO SEE ALEX!

AUNT HELEN SNATCHED PEGGY'S ARM AND PULLED HER ROUGHLY TO THE CELLAR! HER PLAN WAS SIMPLE! THE FURNACE WOULD..LEAVE NO TRACE! SHE SHOVED THE STRUGGLING CHILD TOWARD IT...
AUNT HELEN! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO ME?
YOU'LL SEE.. YOU LITTLE BRAT!

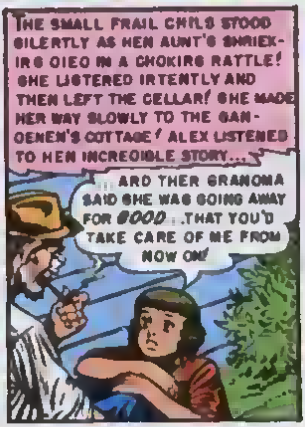
AUNT HELEN SWURG OPEN TRE HUGE FURNACE DOOR AND A BLAST OF HEAT SEARED FORTH' THE LEAPING FLAMES REACHED OUTWARD LIKE CLUTCHING FINGERS.
LET ME GO! LET ME GO!
OON'T TNT TO GET AWAT, PEGGY! I'M MUCH TOO STRONG FOR YOU' I..I..

SUDDENLY, AUNT HELEN'S SHIP ON PEGGY'S ARM NELAXED! PEGGY TURNED, FOLLOWING HER AUNT'S TENRIFIED SAZE...
GRANDMA! OH, GRANDMA... TOU'RE JUST IN TIME!
OH, MY...GOD!


AUNT HELEN SACKED AWAY! THE BLOOD DRAINED FROM HER FACE! HER EYES WERE WIDE IN HORROR...
NO...NO...NO!


THE FLAMES LICKED AT HER SACK AS SHE COWERED TOWARDS THE FURNACE'S YAWRING DOORWAY...

PEGGY WATCHED AS HER AUNT'S SOOT WAS LIFTED AND THRUST INTO THE CONSUMING FLAMES


THE SMALL FRAIL CHILD STOOD SILENTLY AS HER AUNT'S SHRIEKING DIED IN A CHOKING RATTLE! SHE LISTENED INTENTLY AND THEN LEFT THE CELLAR! SHE MADE HER WAY SLOWLY TO THE GARDENER'S COTTAGE! ALEX LISTENED TO HER INCREDIBLE STORY...
AND THEN GRANDMA SAID SHE WAS GOING AWAY FOR GOOD...THAT YOU'D TAKE CARE OF ME FROM NOW ON!

HEH, HEH! WELL, THAT'S IT, KIDDIES! PEGGY'S HAPPY NOW WITH NICE OLD ALEX GATES! THEY SPERD MANY A PLEASART EVERING TOGETHER DISCUSSING UNCLE LARRY...WHOSE PLAN FELL THROUGH AND AUNT HELEN, WHOSE IDEA ENDED UP TOO HOT FOR HER! AND NOW, I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO MY SWEET GHOULUNATIC... THE OLD WITCH!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! I BEE BY YOUR LEERING FACES THAT YOU ARE EAGERLY AWAITING ANOTHER OF MY DELICIOUS HONROR-SERVINGS! WELL, YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED! THE FINE IS LEAPING AND CRACKLING AROUND MY CAULDRON, AND ITS EVIL BREW IS BUBBLING AND STEAMING! SO COME CLOSER, WHERE YOU CAN INHALE THE FOUL-SMELLING AROMAS... AND YOUR HOSTESS, *THE OLD WITCH*, MISTRESS OF *THE HAUNT OF FEAR* WILL DISH OUT A TASTY TALE OF TERROR CALLED...

REVENGE IS THE NUTS!

IT STOOD LIKE A HUGE TOMB IN THE DRAB, CEMETERY-LIKE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE! THE IVY THAT CLUNG TO ITS WEATHERED GREY WALLS CURLED LIKE SERPENTS ABOUT THE IRON BARS SET IN EACH WINDOW! IT WAS A FAMILIAR BUILDING TO THE PASSERS-BY! AT TIMES, IF ONE LISTENED, THE ANGUISHED SCREAMS AND HYSTERICAL RAVINGS OF THE INMATES COULD BE HEARD! THE IRON SIGN OVER THE GATES TOLD THE SOMBRE STRUCTURE'S IDENTITY... THE *CROYDON INSANE ASYLUM*...

HA-HA-HA-HA!

AAAAAAAAHH!

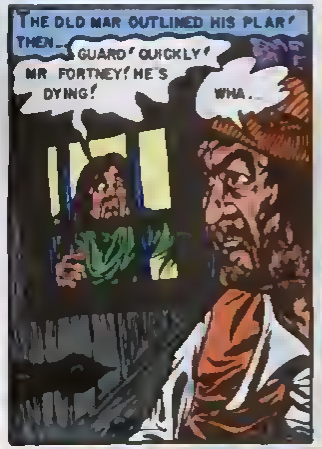
INSIDE THE MOLOY STONE WALLS, IN ONE WING OF THE ASYLUM, WAS THE OFFICE OF LYTHAM BLACKPOOL ... THE DOCTON IN CHANGE OF CROYDON! AT HIS DESK SAT AN UNWELCOME VISITOR ...
GOOD GRIEF, BLACKPOOL! WHAT WAS THAT .. THAT HORRIBLE SCREAM?
DO NOT BE ALARMED, MR ALDERSHOT! IT WAS ONLY ONE OF THE PATIENTS! PROBABLY HAVING A NIGHTMARE .
BUT DOWN IN THE DAMP DEPTHS OF CHOYDON INSANE ASYLUM, THE PATIENT SCREAMED AGAIN! IT WAS NOT A NIGHTMARE THE POOR WOUL WAS EXPENIESCING, BUT THE STING OF A HORSEHIDE WHIP ..
THAT'S ENOUGH, JEFFERS! YOU'LL KILL HIM .. AND YOU KNOW WHAT BLACKPOOL SAID...
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I'LL STOP! HE'S UNCONSCIOUS ANYWAY!
MEANWHILE, UPSTAIRS, IN LYTHAM BLACKPOOL'S OFFICE
IT IS THIS LETTER THAT HAS BROUGHT ME TO CHOYDON, DOCTON BLACKPOOL! A RELATIVE OF ONE OF THE PATIENTS HERE SENT IT TO ME! ITS CONTENTS SHOCKED ME!
SHOCKED YOU, MR ALDERSHOT?
YES! THE WRITER'S SON IS AN INMATE OF CHOYDON! HE TOLD HIM MOTHER OF THE INHUMAN TREATMENT OF THE PATIENTS OF THIS INSTITUTION. SHE WRITES OF WHIPPING.. STARVATION.. UNSANITARY CONDITIONS ..
JUST A MOMENT, MR ALDERSHOT!
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU BELIEVE IN THESE RADICALLY NEW IDEAS ABOUT THE TREATMENT OF THE INSANE OR NOT! I, FOR ONE, AS HEAD OF THIS INSTITUTION, FOLLOW THE ACCEPTED METHOD!
AN INSANE PERSON IS POSSESSED OF THE DEVIL .. OR EVIL SPIRITS THAT CONTROL HIS MIND AND BODY! ONLY BY INFLICTING SEVERE PAIN UPON THE PATIENT CAN WE DRIVE THESE EVIL DEMONS FROM HIS BODY .AND THEREBY CURE HIM!
YOU'RE WRONG! IT'S CRUEL TO DO THAT TO THOSE POOR SOULS! INSANITY IS A SICKNESS!!!
MR ALDERSHOT! THIS INTERVIEW IS AT AN END! GOOD-DAY!

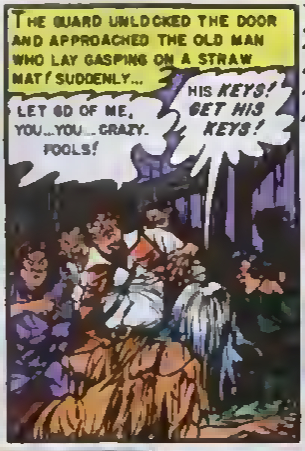
DOCTOR BLACKPOOL WATCHED AS MR. ALDERSHOT STRODE ANGRILY OUT OF HIS OFFICE..
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE END OF THIS, BLACKPOOL! I'LL TAKE THIS LETTER TO THE NEWSPAPERS... THEY'LL EXPOSE YOU AND YOUR... YOUR... INSTITUTION!
AFTER MR. ALDERSHOT LEFT, DOCTOR BLACKPOOL MADE HIS WAY DOWN THE STONE STEPS THAT LED TO THE DUNGEONS OF CROYDON! HE MOTIONED TO THE GUARD TO UNLOCK A DOOR! INSIDE, A YOUNG MAN LAY PROSTRATE ON THE STONE FLOOR ... SOBBING...
I HOPE YOU'VE LEARNED YOUR LESSON, MOULTON! NEXT TIME YOUR DEAR MOTHER VISITS YOU.. DON'T COMPLAIN TO HER ABOUT HOW WE TREAT YOU
DOCTOR BLACKPOOL TURNED AND LEFT THE DARK CELL
ALL RIGHT, GUARD! YOU CAN TAKE HIM BACK TO THE WARD!
YES, DOCTOR!
AS DOCTOR BLACKPOOL'S FOOTSTEPS FADED AWAY
C'MON, MOULTON! THE DOC SAYS YOU CAN GO BACK TO THE WARD!
I... I CAN'T MOVE! I...
THE GUARD PULLED THE LASH-SCARRED YOUNG MAN TO HIS FEET! HE SCREAMED IN PAIN
I SAID... COME ON!
OWWW!
P-PLEASE... HAVE PITY...
ROUGHLY, THE GUARD PUSHED AND SHOVED THE PAIN-WRACKED BODY OF THOMAS MOULTON UP THE GREY-STONE STEPS AND DOWN THE CORRIDOR TO THE WARD! UNLOCKING THE DOOR, THE GUARD HURLED HIM IN.. WHERE HE WENT SPRAWLING
IT.. IT'S THOMAS!
BLACKPOOL'S HAD HIM LASHED!
A MILD, SAD-FACED, GREY-HAIRED OLD MAN BENT AND COMFORTED THE WRITHING LAD! THE OTHER INMATES GATHERED AROUND ..
WHY DID HE DO IT, TOM? WHY DID HE HAVE YOU WHIPPED?
I... I COMPLAINED... TO MY MOTHER... ABOUT.. HOW.. WE'RE TREATED... HERE...

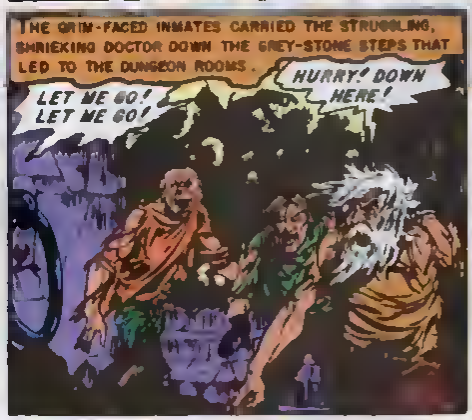
BEYOND THE GROUP OF GATHERED INMATES STOOD A MONSTROUS MAN! HE STARED DUMBLY AT THEM—HIS FACE BLANK AND EXPRESSIONLESS..
HOW DID HE FIND OUT THAT YOU COMPLAINED, TOM?
MY MOTHER WROTE TO AN OLD FRIEND.. WHO WROTE TO BLACKPOOL FOR AN APPOINTMENT TO DISCUSS THE MATTER!
THE YOUNG MAN CLUTCHED AT THE GREY-HAIRED OLD MAN'S TATTERED CLOTHES...
WHY DO YOU STAY HERE, MISTER FORTNEY? YOU ARE NOT INSANE! WHY DON'T YOU MAKE YOUR FAMILY TAKE YOU OUT?
THEY DON'T WANT TO, SON! THEY PAY DOCTOR BLACKPOOL TO KEEP ME HERE..
AT THAT MOMENT, DOCTOR BLACKPOOL ENTERED THE BARE WARD..
GET UP, FORTNEY! LEAVE HIM ALONE!
I'M ONLY TRYING TO COMFORT HIM! YOU..
DOCTOR BLACKPOOL SWUNG OUT AT THE OLD MAN, STINGING HIM ACROSS THE FACE
I SAID.. LEAVE HIM ALONE!
THE HUGE, OLMB-FACED INMATE WHO HAD BEEN STARING BLANKLY AT THE BRUTAL SCENE SUDDENLY MOVED FORWARD! HIS EYES WERE WIDE NOW. HIS MOUTH TWISTED IN AN ANGRY SNARL...
NO, OLAF! NO! I'M NOT HURT...
KEEP AWAY! KEEP AWAY, YOU OVERGROWN.. GUARDS! GUARDS!
OLAF GRABBED AT THE DOCTOR WITH A HUGE FIST AND SAVAGELY SMASHED THE OTHER FIST INTO THE DOCTOR'S SCREAMING FACE
GUARDS! YAAAAAH!
STOP, OLAF! STOP!
THREE GUARDS BURST INTO THE WARD AND FINALLY DRAGGED THE SNARLING OLAF FROM THE COWERING DOCTOR..
PUT HIM .. PUT HIM IN CHAINS! I'LL... I'LL DEAL WITH HIM LATER!
YES, SIR!

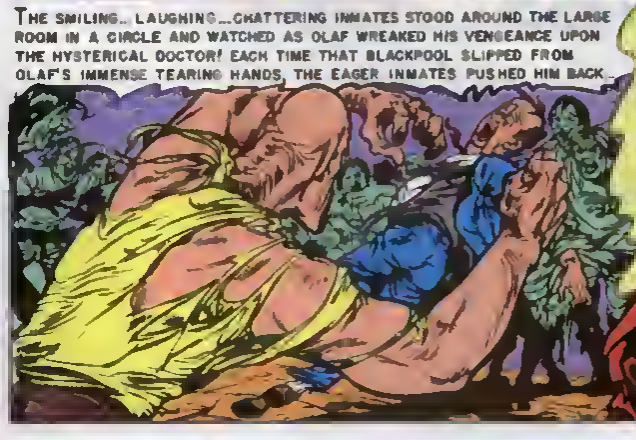
AFTER THE DOCTOR HAD LEFT THE WARD...
POOH OLAF! DOCTOR BLACKPOOL WILL PUNISH HIM!
HE'LL HAVE HIM KILLED!
THE OLD MAN SHOOK HIS HEAD..
NO! THE DOCTOR WOULDN'T DO THAT! IT WOULD MEAN MONEY OUT OF HIS POCKET! FOR EVERY INMATE IN CROYDON, THE GOVERNMENT GIVES DOCTOR BLACKPOOL A SUM OF MONEY...
...WITH WHICH HE IS SUPPOSED TO FEED US PROPERLY... SEE THAT WE HAVE THE BEST OF CARE.. CLEAN BEDS.. CLEAN CLOTHES..
DON'T THEY GIVE HIM THE MONEY ANYMORE?
OF COURSE THEY DO, BUT HE POCKETS IT INSTEAD OF GOOD FOOD, HE FEEDS US ROTTEN CONDEMNED MEAT! INSTEAD OF CLEAN BEDS.. CLEAN CLOTHES... HE GIVES US... THIS!
NAGS TO WEAR!
STRAW MATS TO SLEEP UPON!
MEANWHILE OLAF WAS CHAINED TO A RING EMBEDDED IN THE FLOOR OF A LARGE DUNGEON ROOM! THE CHAIN PERMITTED HIM TO MOVE IN A CIRCLE ABOUT THE RING...
I'LL TEACH YOU TO HIT ME, YOU APE!
OLAF'S SCREAMS OF PAIN COULD BE HEARD BY THE INMATES OF THE WARD...
POOR OLAF! HE'S BEING WHIPPED!
IF HE EVER GETS HIS HANDS ON BLACKPOOL NOW, HE'LL TEAR HIM TO PIECES!
BUT DOCTOR BLACKPOOL WAS VERY CAREFUL TO STAND JUST OUTSIDE OF THE CONFINES OF THE CIRCLE THAT OLAF COULD MOVE IN...
THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING, OLAF! JUST THE BEGINNING...

YES, KIDDIES! IT *WAS* JUST THE BEGINNING! EACH DAY, DOCTOR BLACKPOOL VISITED OLAF. TO TEASE HIM. TAUNT HIM ..
HUNGRY, OLAF? I'LL WAGER YOU'D LIKE THIS FOOD, WOULDN'T YOU? HERE... HAVE SOME..
DOCTOR BLACKWELL PUT THE TRAY OF FOOD JUST OUTSIDE OF OLAF'S REACH
WHAT'S THE MATTER, OLAF? DON'T YOU WANT IT? AREN'T YOU HUNGRY? HA, HA, HA, HAH..
SUMMER PASSED, AND WINTER CAME TO CROYDON! COLD COLD WINTER! THE INMATES SHIVERED IN THEIR SCANT RAGS
THE FIRE'S DIED OUT!
HE'S TOO CHEAP TO PROVIDE HEAT!
DOCTOR BLACKWELL CONTINUED TO MISTREAT POOR OLAF...
WELL, OLAF? *THIRSTY*? HERE'S A PITCHER OF *WATER* FOR YOU!
AS OLAF REACHED EAGERLY FOR THE WATER. HIS PARCHED LIPS QUIVERING..
OH, DEAR! THAT WAS *CLUMSY* OF ME!
AND WHILE OLAF FELL TO HIS KNEES TO SIP UP THE SPILLED WATER FROM THE SMASHED PITCHER...
DRINK IT, OLAF... DRINK IT LIKE AN *ANIMAL*... THE ANIMAL YOU *ARE*!
IN THE WARD, OLD MILD, GREY-HAIRED MR. FORTNEY PLEADED WITH THE OTHER INMATES
HE MUST BE PUNISHED! DOCTOR BLACKPOOL MUST BE *PUNISHED* FOR THIS...
HOW? HOW?



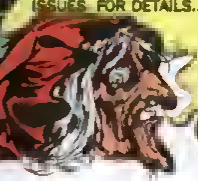






AND SO I LEAVE THE HAPPY CIRCLE OF MANIACS AT CROYDON...ALL OF WHOM *SEEM* TO BE HAVING A *RIPPING GOOD TIME* ..AND BRING MY STORY TO ITS INEVITABLE END! I HOPE YOU WERE *MAD* ABOUT POOR DOCTOR BLACKPOOL'S PUNISHMENT! EVEN RICE, MILD-OLD MR. FORTNEY WENT *CRAZY* OVER IT!

AND YOU'D BE CRAZY NOT TO FILL IN YOUR EC COMICS COLLECTIONS WITH OUR BACK ISSUES. FOR DETAILS...



READ *THE VAULT KEEPER'S CORNER!*

'BYE..NOW!

THE END

YOU SAY IT'S A 45-MINUTE BUS TRIP, WITH A TRANSFER, TO THE COMIC BOOK SHOP? YOU SAY IT'S A HARROWING 30-MINUTE DRIVE ON THE EXPRESSWAY TO THE MALL, AND THEN A 30-MINUTE MERRY-GO-ROUND RIDE TO FIND A PARKING PLACE? YOU SAY YOUR TOWN DOESN'T EVEN **HAVE** A COMIC BOOK SHOP OR BOOKSTORE? IS THAT WHAT'S TROUBLING YOU, BUNKY? WELL, THEN, YOU SHOULD

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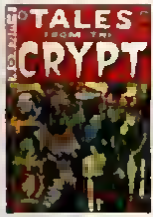

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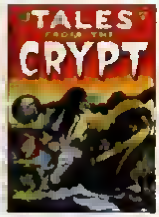

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GLAD VAULT #1

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GLAD VAULT #5

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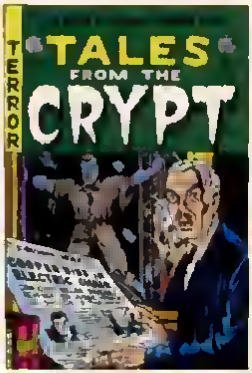

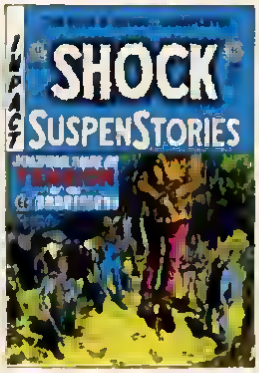

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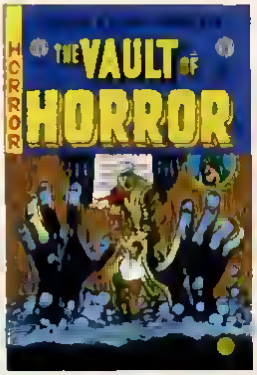

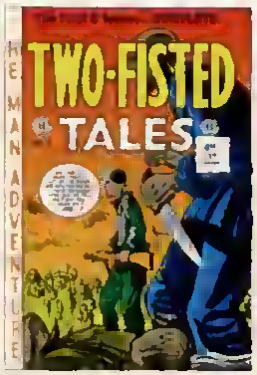

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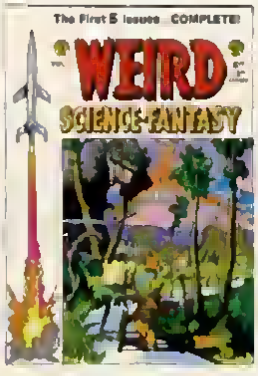

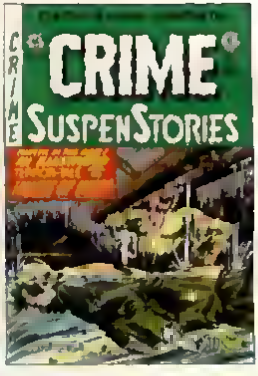

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